

Nokia plans to release CDMA Windows Phone 7 devices in the US

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When Nokia announced its strategic alliance with Microsoft last month, it made it very clear that the company needs to gain a foothold in United States. Nokia till date has only been releasing GSM based Symbian devices on AT&T and T-Mobile USA. This has limited Nokia's exposure in the US market.

As Symbian is soon to be dead, Nokia plans to release CDMA based Windows Phone 7 in United States as well. Why re - enter CDMA? AT&T recently announced the acquisition of T-Mobile USA, making it the only largest and major GSM provider in United States by the end of the year, when the acquisition is actually completed. The only competition AT&T will get is from Sprint and Verizon, whose networks are based on CDMA technology. It makes a lot of sense to have CDMA phones released in the United States to get a wider exposure and reach.

This decision was confirmed by Nokia USA Vice President and General Manager Mark Slater in an interview with Forbes at the ongoing CTIA wireless conference. To quote him: "Our go-forward smartphone platform for CDMA will be Windows"

However the release date for Nokia Windows Phones is still a bit foggy. Although analyst say they don't see a Nokia Windows Phone before 2012, Stephen Elop, Nokia CEO, has on several occasions said that he would be pushing his team to come with a Nokia Windows Phone by the end of 2011. And we are here talking about a GSM based Windows Phone 7. Till date there was no talk about CDMA versions of Windows Phone 7 by Nokia. In a recent regulatory filing, Nokia indicated that the transition to Windows Phone would take approximately two years.

Till the time Nokia makes this transition to Windows Phone, for the United States market, they would be focused on GSM based Symbian devices only. Nokia today, at the CTIA wireless conference announced the Nokia Astound (Nokia C7 revised) exclusively for T-Mobile US, which is a Symbian ^3 based device. It goes on sale this April with T-Mobile for \$79.99